

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for providing a conference call, comprising:
detecting a conference call event that was previously configured by a subscriber user;
identifying participant users associated with the conference call event;
contacting the participant users;
receiving a response from the participant users; and
establishing a conference call between the participant users and the subscriber user based on the received responses,
wherein at least one of the detecting and identifying steps is performed without user intervention.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein detecting a conference call event includes:
scanning a data structure for the conference call event.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein the data structure is a calendar application associated with the subscriber user.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the conference call event is a trigger indicating a proposed conference call previously scheduled by the user.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the proposed conference call identifies the participant users and identifying participant users includes:

collecting an identifier for the participant users from a first data structure corresponding to the conference call event; and

collecting contact information for the participant users from a second data structure based on the participant user identifiers.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the first data structure is a calendar application and the second data structure is an address book listing at least the participant users and their corresponding contact information.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein contacting the identified participant users includes:

collecting contact information associated with the participant users; and

establishing a communication connection with the participant users using the contact information.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the contact information comprises telephone numbers associated with the participant users and establishing a communication connection includes:

dialing out to participant users using a respective telephone number.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein contacting the participant users includes calling the participant users using a telephone number and receiving a response from the participant users includes:

for a participant user:

providing an indication to the subscriber user reflecting whether the participant user answers the call.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein providing an indication includes:

providing a no contact message to the subscriber user when the participant user does not answer the call.

11. The method of claim 10, further including:

providing a no conference call message to the subscriber user when none of the participant users answer their respective call.

12. The method of claim 9, wherein providing an indication includes:

providing an acceptance message to the subscriber user when the participant user answers the call.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein providing the acceptance message includes:

determining whether the participant user accepts the call.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein determining whether the participant user accepts the call includes:

performing a feedback process when the participant user declines the call.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein performing a feedback process includes: providing options for the participant user to decline the call, wherein the options include at least one of:

allowing the participant user to record a message for subsequent play back to the subscriber user,

declining the call without any further processing by the participant user;

allowing the participant user to set an alternate telephone number for contacting the participant user, and

allowing the participant user to set a period of time in which the participant user is to be contacted again.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein establishing a conference call includes: establishing a communication connection between participant users and the subscriber user such that the subscriber user and the participant users may conduct a conference call.

17. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

detecting when one of the participant users terminates its contact during the conference call;

providing a termination message to the subscriber user indicating that the one participant user has ended participation in the conference call.

18. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

recording audio information associated with the subscriber user and participant users' participation during the conference call;

converting at least some of the audio information to text information; and

recording the text information in a transcript reflecting a textual temporal based representation of communications that have taken place between the users during the conference call.

19. The method of claim 18, further comprising:

storing a portion of the audio information that cannot be converted to text information as an audio file; and

inserting a pointer to the audio file in the transcript.

20. The method of claim 19, further comprising:

providing the transcript to the subscriber user.

21. The method of claim 19, wherein providing the transcript includes attaching the transcript to an e-mail addressed to the subscriber user.

22. The method of claim 1, wherein contacting the participant users includes:

determining whether a participant user has a preferred device registered with a service center, and

contacting a participant user through the preferred device when the participant user has a registered preferred device.

23. The method of claim 1, wherein the detecting and identifying steps are performed by a digital companion server that provides services to the subscriber user, and wherein contacting the participant users includes:

generating, by the digital companion server, a first message that includes at least instructions for configuring the conference call and telephone numbers for the participant users; and

providing the first message to a conference blasting server.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein providing the first message includes:

generating a second message by the conference blasting server based on the first message, wherein the second message includes instructions for setting up the conference call and the telephone numbers; and

providing the second message to a conference bridge.

25. The method of claim 24, wherein providing the second message includes:
calling, by the conference bridge, the participant users using the telephone numbers included in the second message.

26. The method of claim 1, wherein the subscriber user configures the conference call event by scheduling the conference call in a calendar application for a predetermined date and time and adding the names of the participant users that the subscriber user intends to participate in the conference call.

27. The method of claim 26, comprising receiving input from the subscriber user to add the names of participant users from an address book to the calendar application, the input being received via a graphical user interface.

28. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
detecting when a first participant users was dropped from the conference call;
and
determining whether the first participant user has a preferred device registered with a service center.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein when the first participant user has a registered preferred device,

attempting to contact the first participant user through the preferred device.

30. The method of claim 29, further comprising:

re-establishing the first user with the conference call based on a determination that the first user wishes to continue participation in the conference call.

31. The method of claim 28, wherein when the first participant user does not have a registered preferred device,

determining contact information associated with a device used by the first participant user to participate in the conference call; and

re-establishing the first user with the conference call using the contact information.

32. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

detecting when a first participant user has terminated participation in the conference call; and

determining whether the first participant user voluntarily or involuntarily terminated participation in the conference call based on the type of device the first participant user was operating during participation in the conference call.

33. A method for providing a conference call, the method performed by a server comprising:

- detecting a conference call event previously configured by a subscriber user that indicates when a conference call should be established between the subscriber user and participant users;

- collecting contact information for the participant users;

- providing a message including the contact information to a conference server that is configured to instruct a bridge to establish the conference call between the users by calling the participant users using the contact information included in the message; and

- receiving a response message from the conference server including information associated with the conference call and at least one participant user.

34. The method of claim 33, wherein detecting a conference call event includes:

- scanning a calendar application to determine whether the subscriber user has scheduled a conference call.

35. The method of claim 34, wherein collecting contact information includes

- determining the participant users from the calendar application;

- accessing an address book associated with the subscriber user for collecting the contact information for the participant users; and

- generating the message using the collected contact information.

36. The method of claim 33, wherein providing a message includes:

generating the message using the collected contact information and instructions associated with a date for commencing the conference call, and

using the message by the conference server to generate a second message for instructing the bridge to establish the conference call.

37. The method of claim 33, comprising providing the response message by the bridge when attempting to establish communications with the participant users over a voice network.

38. The method of claim 33, wherein the response message comprises at least one of:

information stating that at least one participant user is declining the call;

information stating that at least one participant user is not answering the call;

information stating that at least one participant user is accepting the call; and

none of the participant users is answering the call.

39. A method for participating in a conference call automatically established by at least one or more communication entity, the method comprising:

- scheduling a conference call at a predetermined time using a calendar application, wherein scheduling includes identifying participant users that are to participate in the conference call; and

- at the predetermined time:

 - receiving an indication that a conference call has been configured in accordance with the scheduled conference call,

 - receiving a indication that at least one participant user has either joined or declined to join the conference call, and

 - during the conference call, receiving an indication that another participant user has ended communications with the conference call when that participant user terminates a connection with a bridge that establishes the conference call in accordance with instructions provided by a server that executes the calendar application.

40. A method for providing a conference call, comprising:

- receiving a message from a first server including instructions for establishing a conference call between participant users and a subscriber user that previously scheduled the conference call with a second server, wherein the second server automatically initiates configuration of the conference call based on the subscriber

user's schedule by providing to the first server contact information for the participant users and the message includes the contact information;

calling the participant users using the contact information included in the message;

receiving a response from the participant users, wherein the response reflects whether the participant user has answered, accepted, not answered, or declined to accept the call; and

establishing a conference call between the users based on the response received from the participant users.

41. A system for providing a conference call, comprising:

- means for detecting a conference call event that was previously configured by a subscriber user;
- means for identifying participant users associated with the conference call event;
- means for contacting the participant users;
- means for receiving a response from the participant users; and
- means for establishing a conference call between the participant users and the subscriber user based on the received responses,

wherein at least one of the means for detecting and means for identifying perform their functions without user intervention.

42. The system of claim 41, wherein the means for detecting a conference call event comprises:

- means for scanning a data structure for the conference call event.

43. The system of claim 42, wherein the data structure is a calendar application associated with the subscriber user.

44. The system of claim 41, wherein the conference call event is a trigger indicating a proposed conference call previously scheduled by the user.

45. The system of claim 44, wherein the proposed conference call identifies the participant users and the means for identifying participant users includes:

means for collecting identifiers for the participant users from a first data structure corresponding to the conference call event; and

means for collecting contact information for the participant users from a second data structure based on the participant user identifiers.

46. The system of claim 45, wherein the first data structure is a calendar application and the second data structure is an address book listing at least the participant users and their corresponding contact information.

47. The system of claim 41, wherein the means for contacting the identified participant users includes:

means for collecting contact information associated with the participant users;
and

means for establishing a communication connection with the participant users using the contact information.

48. The system of claim 47, wherein the contact information comprises telephone numbers associated with participant users, and the means for establishing a communication connection includes:

means for dialing out to participant users using corresponding telephone numbers.

49. The system of claim 41, wherein the means for contacting the participant users includes means for calling the participant users using telephone numbers and the means for receiving a response from the participant users includes:

means for providing, for the participant users, an indication to the subscriber user reflecting whether a specific participant user answers the call.

50. The system of claim 49, wherein the means for providing an indication includes:

means for providing a no contact message to the subscriber user when the participant user does not answer the call.

51. The system of claim 50, further including:

means for providing a no conference call message to the subscriber user when none of the participant users answer their respective call.

52. The system of claim 49, wherein the means for providing an indication includes:

means for providing an acceptance message to the subscriber user when a participant user answers the call.

53. The system of claim 52, wherein the means for providing the acceptance message includes:

means for determining whether a participant user accepts the call.

54. The system of claim 53, wherein the means for determining whether a participant user accepts the call includes:

means for performing a feedback process when a participant user declines the call.

55. The system of claim 54, wherein the means for performing a feedback process includes:

means for providing options for the participant user to decline the call, wherein the options include at least one of:

allowing the participant user to record a message for subsequent play back to the subscriber user,

declining the call without any further processing by the participant user;

allowing the participant user to set an alternate telephone number for contacting the participant user, and

allowing the participant user to set a period of time in which the participant user is to be contacted again.

56. The system of claim 41, wherein the means for establishing a conference call includes:

means for establishing communication connections between participant users and the subscriber user, such that the users may conduct a conference call.

57. The system of claim 41, further comprising:

means for detecting when one of the participant users terminates its contact during the conference call;

means for providing a termination message to the subscriber user indicating that the one participant user has ended participation in the conference call.

58. The system of claim 41, further comprising:

means for recording audio information associated with participant user's participation during the conference call;

means for converting at least some of the audio information to text information;
and

means for recording the text information in a transcript reflecting a textual temporal based representation of communications that have taken place between the users during the conference call.

59. The system of claim 58, further comprising:

means for storing a portion of the audio information that cannot be converted to text information as an audio file; and

means for inserting a pointer to the audio file in the transcript.

60. The system of claim 59, further comprising:

means for providing the transcript to the subscriber user.

61. The system of claim 59, wherein the means for providing the transcript comprises means for attaching the transcript to an e-mail addressed to the subscriber user.

62. The system of claim 41, wherein means for contacting the participant users comprises:

means for determining, for participant users, whether a specific participant user has a preferred device registered with a service center; and

means for contacting a participant user through a preferred device when the participant user has a registered preferred device.

63. The system of claim 41, wherein the means for detecting and means for identifying steps are performed by a digital companion server that provides services to the subscriber user, and wherein the means for contacting the participant users comprises:

means for generating, by the digital companion server, a first message that includes at least instructions for configuring the conference call and telephone numbers for the participant users; and

means for providing the first message to a conference blasting server.

64. The system of claim 63, wherein the means for providing the first message comprises:

means for generating a second message by the conference blasting server based on the first message, wherein the second message includes instructions for setting up the conference call and the telephone numbers; and

means for providing the second message to a conference bridge.

65. The system of claim 64, wherein the means for providing the second message includes:

means for calling, by the conference bridge, the participant users using the telephone numbers included in the second message.

66. The system of claim 41, wherein the subscriber user configures the conference call event by scheduling the conference call in a calendar application for a predetermined time and adding the names of the participant users that the subscriber user intends to participate in the conference call.

67. The system of claim 66, comprising receiving input from the subscriber user to add the names of participant users from an address book to the calendar application, the input being received via a graphical user interface.

68. The system of claim 41, further comprising:

means for detecting when a first participant users was dropped from the conference call; and

means for determining whether the first participant user has a preferred device registered with a service center.

69. The system of claim 68, wherein when the first participant user has a registered preferred device,

means for attempting to contact the first participant user through the preferred device.

70. The system of claim 69, further comprising:

means for re-establishing the first user with the conference call based on a determination that the first user wishes to continue participation in the conference call.

71. The system of claim 68, further including

means for determining contact information associated with a device used by the first participant user to participate in the conference call when the first participant user does not have a registered preferred device; and

means for re-establishing the first user with the conference call using the contact information.

72. The system of claim 41, further comprising:

means for detecting when a first participant user has terminated participation in the conference call; and

means for determining whether the first participant user voluntarily or involuntarily terminated participation in the conference call based on the type of device the first participant user was operating during participation in the conference call.

73. A server for providing a conference call, comprising:

means for detecting a conference call event previously configured by the subscriber user that indicates that a conference call should be established between a subscriber user and participant users;

means for collecting contact information for the participant users;

means for providing a message including the contact information to a conference server that is configured to instruct a bridge to establish a conference call between the users by calling the participant users using the contact information included in the message; and

means for receiving a response message from the conference server including information associated with the conference call and at least one participant user.

74. The system of claim 73, wherein the means for detecting a conference call event comprises:

means for scanning a calendar application to determine whether the subscriber user has scheduled a conference call.

75. The system of claim 73, wherein the means for collecting contact information comprises:

means for determining the participant users from the calendar application;

means for accessing an address book associated with the subscriber user for collecting the contact information for the participant users; and

means for generating the message using the collected contact information.

76. The system of claim 73, wherein the means for providing a message comprises:

means for generating the message using the collected contact information and instructions associated with a time for commencing a conference call previously scheduled by the subscribed user,

wherein the message is used by the conference server to generate a second message for instructing the bridge to establish the conference call.

77. The system of claim 73, wherein the response message is provided by the bridge when attempting to establish communications with the participant users over a voice network.

78. The system of claim 73, wherein the response message reflects at least one of:

the least one participant user declining the call;

the at least one participant user not answering the call;

the at least one participant user accepting the call; and

none of the participant users answering the call.

79. A system for participating in a conference call automatically established by at least one communication entity, the system comprising:

means for scheduling a conference call for a predetermined date using a calendar application, wherein the means for scheduling identifies participant users that are to participate in the conference call; and

means for receiving, on the predetermined date, an indication that a conference call has been configured in accordance with the scheduled conference call,

means for receiving a indication that at least one participant user has either joined or declined to join the conference call, and

means for receiving, during the conference call, an indication that another participant user has ended communications with the conference call when that participant user terminates a connection with a bridge that establishes the conference call in accordance with instructions provided by a server that executes the calendar application.

80. A conference bridge for providing a conference call, comprising:

means for receiving a message from a first server including instructions for establishing a conference call between participant users and a subscriber user that previously scheduled the conference call with a second server, wherein the second server automatically initiates configuration of the conference call based on the

subscriber user's schedule by providing to the first server contact information for the participant users and the message includes the contact information;

means for calling the participant users using the contact information included in the message;

means for receiving a response from the participant users, wherein the responses reflect whether the participant user has answered, accepted, not answered, or declined to accept the call; and

means for establishing a conference call between the users based on the received responses.

81. A system for providing conference calls, comprising:

a first server for detecting a conference call event previously configured by a subscriber user and generating a first message based on the event, wherein the first message includes telephone numbers for a plurality of participant users identified by the subscriber user;

a second server for receiving the first message from the first server and generating a second message based on the first message, wherein the second message includes instructions for configuring a conference call and the telephone numbers; and

a conference bridge for receiving the second message, extracting the telephone numbers from the second message, and calling the participant users using the telephone numbers, and establishing a conference call between the participant users and the subscriber user,

wherein the subscriber user accesses the first server to schedule conference calls for future dates and the first server, second server, and conference bridge automatically attempt to establish the conference calls when the future dates arrive.

82. A computer-readable medium including instructions for performing, when executed by a processor, a method for providing a conference call, comprising:

- detecting a conference call event that was previously configured by a subscriber user;
- identifying participant users associated with the conference call event;
- contacting the participant users;
- receiving responses from the participant users; and
- establishing a conference call between the participant users and the subscriber user based on the received responses,

wherein at least one of the detecting and identifying steps is performed without user intervention.

83. A computer-readable medium including instructions for performing, when executed by a processor, a method for providing a conference call comprising:

- detecting a conference call event previously configured by the subscriber user that indicates that a conference call should be established between a subscriber user and participant users;
- collecting contact information for the participant users;
- providing a message including the contact information to a conference server that is configured to instruct a bridge to establish a conference call between the users by calling the participant users using the contact information included in the message;
- and

receiving a response message from the conference server including information associated with the conference call and at least one participant user.

84. A computer-readable medium including instructions for performing, when executed by a processor, a method for participating in a conference call automatically established by at least one communication entity, the method comprising:

scheduling a conference call for a predetermined time using a calendar application, wherein scheduling includes identifying participant users that are to participate in the conference call; and

on the predetermined time:

receiving an indication that a conference call has been configured in accordance with the scheduled conference call,

receiving a indication that at least one participant user has either joined or declined to join the conference call, and

during the conference call, receiving an indication that another participant user has ended communications with the conference call when that participant user terminates a connection with a bridge that establishes the conference call in accordance with instructions provided by a server that executes the calendar application.

85. A computer-readable medium including instructions for performing, when executed by a processor, a method for providing a conference call, including:

receiving a message from a first server including instructions for establishing a conference call between participant users and a subscriber user that previously scheduled the conference call with a second server, wherein the second server automatically initiates configuration of the conference call based on the subscriber user's schedule by providing to the first server contact information for the participant users and the message includes the contact information;

calling the participant users using the contact information included in the message;

receiving responses from the participant users, wherein the responses reflect whether the participant user has answered, accepted, not answered, or declined to accept the call; and

establishing a conference call between the users based on the received responses.

86. A method for providing a conference call, comprising:

detecting a request to establish a conference call initiated by a subscriber user;

identifying participant users identified in the request;

contacting the participant users;

receiving a response from the participant users; and

establishing a conference call between the participant users and the subscriber user based on the received responses,

wherein at least one of the contacting, receiving, and establishing steps is performed without user intervention.

87. A method for providing a conference call, the method performed by a server comprising:

- detecting a conference call event configured by a subscriber user that indicates a conference call to be established between the subscriber user and participant users;

- collecting contact information for the participant users;

- providing a message including the contact information to a conference server that is configured to instruct a bridge to establish the conference call between the users by calling the participant users using the contact information included in the message;
- and

- receiving a response message from the conference server including information associated with the conference call and at least one participant user.

88. A method for participating in a conference call automatically established by at least one or more communication entities, the method comprising:

- receiving an indication that a conference call has been configured in response to a user's request to establish the conference call,

- receiving a indication that at least one participant user has either joined or declined to join the conference call, and

during the conference call, receiving an indication that another participant user has ended communications with the conference call when that participant user terminates a connection with a bridge that establishes the conference call in accordance with instructions provided by a server.

89. A method for providing a conference call, comprising:

receiving a message from a first server including instructions for establishing a conference call between participant users and a subscriber user that schedules the conference call with a second server, wherein the second server automatically initiates configuration of the conference call by providing to the first server contact information for the participant users and the message includes the contact information;

calling the participant users using the contact information included in the message;

receiving a response from the participant users, wherein the response reflects whether the participant user has answered, accepted, not answered, or declined to accept the call; and

establishing a conference call between the users based on the response received from the participant users.

90. A system for providing a conference call, comprising:

means for detecting a conference call event that is configured by a subscriber user;

means for identifying participant users associated with the conference call event;
means for contacting the participant users;
means for receiving a response from the participant users; and
means for establishing a conference call between the participant users and the
subscriber user based on the received responses,
wherein at least one of the means for contacting, means for receiving, and
means for identifying perform their functions without user intervention.